614 /1/ Cancuc is a Tzeltal town of Chiapas, Mexico, whose
[101] social organization is based on exogamous patrilineal clans.
[T76] These clans are intimately related to: 1) the nagual or guardian
[551] spirit, which is given the name of lab among the Indians of this
[613] region; 2) the native surnames that constitute the lineages within
[621] the clans; 3) the "barrios," as the Spanish chroniclers called the endogamous tribal subdivisions (called calpulli among the Aztecs and culibal in Cancuc); 4) the kinship system; and 5) the behavior.

614 All the individuals belonging to a clan consider themselves
601 "legitimate siblings" /Sp. "hermanos legítimos"/, using the terms that designate this class of relatives. This theoretical consanguineous kinship is expressed by means of the word chapomal -- a Cancuquero /a person from Cancuc/ calls another "brother" be-
614 cause he is his chapomal. This form of usage is indicative of
601 common ancestry, something that we were not able to clarify, as
124 our questions on this point only received answers that showed that
829 they had lost any notion of a real or mythical ancestor. Our informants invariably explained this situation with the expressions: "it is the custom," "San Juan /Saint John/ (Patron Saint of Cancuc) ordered it so," or "it was ordered by Manuel (God)." What does constitute a clear concept in the minds of all is that "formerly" each clan lived in a cave, from which its members went out in the form of human beings to populate the earth and in which lived the naguales, or lab, that bound them to their place of origin.
[T75] The soul came back to this cave after death. There are as many caves as the number of clans.

614 The children belonged to the paternal clan. A woman who marries does not become a member of the clan of her husband.

/2/ Exogamy is strictly respected; persons belonging to the same clan never marry each other.

[591] The clans are not local, as their members live in all of the places and rancherías.

[178] At present the clans lack chiefs, this institution having dis-
[669] appeared about 30 years ago, according to all our information, when the zone that we are studying underwent a chaotic period due to political revolts.

/16 cont./

two women belonged to the same clan, and in the other two they were women from two different clans. The levirate and sororate exist, but do not constitute a custom practiced /17/ by many; formerly it must have been more frequent, as is proved by the fact of designating the stepfather and stepmother by the same terms used for the father's brother and mother's sister, respectively, and the stepchildren as nephews and nieces. There are several cases of marriage between brother and sister of one clan and sister and brother of another clan. Marriage between cross-cousins is frequent, especially that of a man with the daughter of the mother's brother. Husband and wife always belong to the same generation.

Residence is patrilocal, with temporary matrilocal residence for a year after marriage.

There still prevails the custom that those who intercede in a direct manner in the preparation of the cadaver and in the inhumation must be members of a different clan. If a married woman who has not had children dies, she is buried with her relatives, without the intervention of her husband.

The members of one and the same clan co-operate among themselves and lend each other mutual aid; the younger people obey and respect their elders in the same way that a younger brother respects and obeys his older brother. And we have stressed how "sorcery" is practiced only within the limits of the clan as a means of social control.

Mexico City,
Mexico

Note: The materials for the present study were collected during two seasons of field work: May-June, 1945, and June, 1946, financed by the University of Chicago, Instituto Nacional de Antropología de México, and Government of the State of Chiapas.

2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NVS Tzeltal NVS

NOTES ON THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF TZELTAL COMMUNITIES OF CHIAPAS

In February and March of 1938, Alfonso Villa Rojas made an ethnological reconnaissance of Tzeltal settlements in northeastern Chiapas, Mexico. The work was done under the auspices of Carnegie Institution of Washington as a guide to the planning of more intensive field work. San Cristobal de las Casas, where Mr. Villa arrived on the first of February, served naturally as a base. A short trip was taken to Teopizca and Amatenango, and a second to visit the ruins of San Gregorio[1] and the village of Chanal. On the fourteenth of that month, Mr. Villa started northward from Las Casas, visiting fifteen Tzeltal settlements, and then entered Chol country at Tila and left Chiapas by airplane from Salto de Agua.

In Mexico City Mr. Villa was provided with a letter of introduction from Ing. Ignacio Marquina, head of the Department of Prehistoric Monuments, of the Secretariat of Public Education. In Tuxtla Gutierrez the Governor of Chiapas, Ing. Efrain Gutierrez, received Mr. Villa and heard from him explanation of Mr. Villa's interests and purposes. Mr. Frans Blom had given Mr. Villa a letter of introduction, but the person addressed was not in Las Casas when Mr. Villa arrived. In Las Casas Mr. Villa received great help from Don José Villanueva. To all these persons who extended kindness and help, grateful acknowledgment is made. Dr. Ruth Bunzel kindly wrote information on the region to Mr. Villa before he began his journey.

The Tzeltal communities, given in the order in which they were visited and with indication of the length of time spent in each, were as follows: Amatenango (2 days), Chanal (2 days), Tenejapa (3 days), Cancuc (1 day), Oxchuc (5 days), San Martin (1 day), Tenango (2 days), Sivacá (1 day), Ococingo (6 days), Bachajón (2 days), Citalá (2 days), Guaquitepec (2½ days), Chilón (2 days), Yajalon (2 days), Petalcingo (½ day).

These villages have been the locus of a number of Indian uprisings,[2] and disturbances have occurred recently, in 1914, 1917, and 1930. Therefore the inhabitants of Spanish culture (Ladinos) are not infrequently uneasy. In Cancuc and Oxchuc Mr. Villa's work was impeded by a revival of this uneasiness, the Ladinos fearing that the celebrations of the carnival season might lead the Indians to acts of violence. With this exception, however, Mr. Villa found the Indians accessible and conditions of work favorable. The information reported herein was obtained in almost every instance from Indians, not Ladinos. Mr. Villa used an interpreter in cases where the Indians did not speak Spanish, although he has a command of Yucatec, and has done ethnological work in Yucatan,[3] he does not speak Tzeltal.

The notes Starr[4] collected on the Tzeltal in 1901 were apparently[5] obtained

[1] For a short description of these ruins, see Schuman, 1936, pp. 236–105.
[2] Vicente Pineda, 1888. [4] Starr, 1902.
[3] Redfield and Villa Rojas. [5] Ibid. pp. 69–72.

-: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (2,3,8) 1939 NV9 Tzeltal NV5

114 chiefly at Tenejapa and Cancuc. In 1925 Blom and LaFarge[1] entered the Tzeltal country from the north, visiting Bachajón, Sivaca, Tenango, Cancuc, Tenejapa, and Amatenango. These authors have published a short general account[2] of the culture of these people. In 1928 the John Geddings Gray Memorial Expedition of the Tulane University of Louisiana passed through the villages of Ococingo and Sivaca, and visited the hacienda "El Real." At this last place Carlos Basauri, a member of the expedition, collected notes on the Tzeltals.[3] Marcos E. Becerra, who was for ten years head of the Department of Public Education of Chiapas, assembled information on the languages, ethnography, and history of the Indians of the highlands and of other parts of the state.[4] Dr. Ruth Bunzel has spent some time recently in the region; her materials are unpublished.

•101 361 The Tzeltal-speaking communities may be divided into those situated in the highlands (Amatenango, Chanal, Tenejapa, Cancuc, Oxchuc, San Martín, and Tenango), and those situated at less than 1000 m. above sea level and that consequently enjoy a warmer climate (Sivaca, Ococingo, Bachajón, Citalá, Guaquitepec, Chilón, Yajalón, and Petalcingo).

133 In general the State of Chiapas is highly dissected and mountainous. It is crossed from east to west with three cordilleras, with subdivisions into various branches which cross with one another to form a complicated orographic system.[5] The ranges which cross the Tzeltal region are those belonging to the Cordillera de Huitepec, reaching an altitude of 2597 m. above sea level, in a mountain of this name situated east of the city of Las Casas. With the exception of some [361] Chamula settlements, this is the settlement of greatest altitude (2110 m. above sea level)[6] in the entire state. From this point and continuing northward are to be found the other pueblos Villa visited. The land decreases in altitude until it reaches the Ococingo Valley where there is a sharp descent of 600 m.[7] From here on, the terrain is not so dissected and the altitude is less than 1000 m. above sea level and becomes gradually less.

132 [823] As is natural, the climates of these two zones present marked differences which have given rise to the expressions "tierra fría" and "tierra caliente" by which the natives distinguish them. The former refers to the higher region where, according to Amram, "The temperature rarely falls below freezing, though in November, 1935, it dropped as low as 24° F. During the long dry period, when for weeks at a time no rain falls, the temperature in the shade occasionally rises above 75°, and the temperature in the sun may reach well over 100°. The relative humidity is low, and there are great differences between shade and sun temperatures. The nights are cool."[8]

The region of the tierra caliente begins in the Valley of Ococingo and the temperature rises as one goes northward. At Salto de Agua, 73 m. above sea level, one experiences tropical heat.

[1] Blom and LaFarge, 1927.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2: 124–400.
[3] Basauri, 1931.
[4] Becerra, 1932 and 1933.
[5] Emeterio Pineda, 1845, p. 20. See also Waibel, 1935, pp. 69–77; Santiabañez, 1910, p. 7.
[6] Emeterio Pineda, 1845, p. 20.
[7] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2: 516.
[8] *Ibid.*, 2: 377.
[8] Amram, 1937, p. 62.

21 Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NW Tzeltal NW9

As is the case in the highlands of Guatemala, the outstanding social unit, corresponding to a tribe, is the population of several hundred or several thousand Indians whose activities center in one leading settlement from which the community gets its name. As in Guatemala, these communities vary greatly with respect to the proportion of Indians living permanently in this central settlement. Dr. Tax[1] uses the phrase "town nucleus type" for Guatemalan Indian communities in which all or a large majority of the Indians live in the principal settlement, and the phrase "vacant town type" for those in which most of the Indians live in scattered rural habitations, coming to the town center occasionally for commercial, governmental, or festal reasons. Among the Tzeltals the town-nucleus type is less atypical than it is in Guatemala, and the town-nucleus communities are suffering from a scarcity of land. The following communities may be regarded as of this type: Amatenango, San Martin, Tenango, Sivacá, Petalcingo, and probably also Chanal and Citalá, although at least in the case of the last two, there are also considerable numbers of Indians dwelling in the countryside. The vacant-town type of community is represented by Cancuc, Oxchuc, Bachajón, and Chilón. It will be seen that both types are represented in both highlands and lowlands. With respect to this classification Tenejapa, Guaquitepec, and Yajalon are intermediate, and illustrate Tax's "Type III" in that many of the people live in the town and work their fields closely surrounding it, while many live on their farms and only occasionally come to town.

As in the highlands of Guatemala, the ethnic distinction between Indian and Ladino is marked, here also the Ladinos[2] are much outnumbered by the Indians, and here too the Ladinos are very predominately town-dwellers. In Chilón and Yajalon the permanent town-dwellers are chiefly Ladinos; the permanent population of Oxchuc consists of about seventy Ladino families, the several thousand Indians live about the town and in the country. In other towns ("Tenejapa," Citalá, Guaquitepec and Petalcingo) a considerable number of Ladino families have become established, although in these communities there are more Indians even among the inhabitants of the town itself than there are Ladinos. A general disposition to exclude Ladinos from permanent settlement in Indian communities is most marked in Cancuc, the site of the uprising of 1712, and where in 1935 some Ladino merchants were slain by the Indians. No Ladinos reside there now. In Amatenango, Chanal, Bachajon, San Martin, Tenango, and Sivaca the Indians are also unfavorable to settlement by Ladinos, in each of the three last-named villages the only Ladino residents are the school-teacher and the government-imposed municipal agent. Recently a few Ladino tradespeople have settled in Bachajón, and a "Center of Native Education" has been established there (as also at Amatenango) by the Mexican national government. In the lowland towns of

[1] Tax, [illegible] pp. 144 f.

[2] It is interesting that in Tenejapa, where both Indians and Ladinos live in town, the two groups recognize different patron saints, and there are separate schools for Indians and for Ladinos, whereas in Oxchuc where all the Indians live outside the town, the same santos are worshiped by both groups, but the Ladinos maintain their own celebration on the day of the festival.

[3] Vicente Pineda, [illegible]

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965) 1967
[p.455-A]
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Teklum

Death as a Way of Life: The Increasing Resort to Homicide in a Maya Indian Community[1]

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The breaking-down of a social-control system based on belief in the guardianship of the spiritual ancestors and their temporal agents, the curers, is reflected in a rising homicide rate as people turn to individual sanctions when threatened. The acts of homicide differ in their social significance according to who is killed, the context, the agency, and the motivation of the killer. Thirty-seven homicides between 1938 and 1965, analyzed in terms of these component variables, reflect the conflicts arising from competition in new economic enterprises, the rising suspicion of curers' abuse of their supernatural power, and the loss of belief in the guardianship of the ancestors.

THE social impact of homicide has caused some analysts[2] to treat it and its supposed inverted complement, suicide, as one kind of behavior with a single meaning, ignoring Durkheim's caveat that behavioral rubrics categorize diverse phenomena. Here I shall analyze the variety of strategies involved in killing in a Mexican community, which I shall call Teklum (the Tzeltal term for village), and endeavor to show how rules of behavior are expressed in killing and in attempts to avoid being killed. Further, I shall endeavor to point out what these indicate about structural and organizational changes both within the community and in its relations with the wider society. Since suicide is absent, except for a single case of a madman, I have restricted my enquiry to homicide.

Teklum is a predominantly Indian township of Mexico. The population of the town center—about 1,900—includes only one Ladino, or non-Indian, family, that of the schoolteacher. The sense of community is limited to people living in the center and in the four nearby hamlets (*barrios*).

The town center is divided physically and socially into two endogamous sections, called "upper" and "lower." The outlying hamlets are linked to the nearest section by social and economic ties. The civil and religious posts of the town are, in local theory, apportioned evenly between the sections. This was in fact true until the 1950's; for each of the ranked posts had a paired complement, so that both sides of the dual division were represented, and the single posts of president and *síndico* (the president's administrative assistant) were al-

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 8 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

175 177 648 797 The mistakes, lack of attention and pretensions of the Indians in regard to the Christian doctrine, who they say they know, and the ones instructed best in them, say as many heretic words as Christian, is consequence or necessary sequel of the lack of care in the secular and ecclesiastical government.

This situation became more and more acute owing largely to the political unrest which absorbed the attention of the authorities, unrest which culminated in the separation of Chiapas from Guatemala and in 1824 its incorporation with Mexico.

175 177 648 The next period, *invasion of lands by Ladinos*, extends from about 1850 to 1911, when the first sparks of the Mexican Revolution reached Chiapas. In this period Ladinos began to invade lands of the Indian communities by bribery or by force. Toward 1856 the Indians complained against the invasion of lands in San Martin, San Miguel Mitontic, San Pedro Chenalo, Cuncuc, and Tenejapa, but failed to halt Ladino inroads (Trens, 1942, pp. 274–75).

The history of recent times, from 1920 on, is marked by increasing support from federal authorities throughout the entire [178] republic. In the Tzeltal area progress has been slow but constantly improving (see LaFarge, 1940; Beals, 1951).

Ethnographic Studies of the Region

114 [101] In his first trip through the Mayance area in 1839 and 1840, Stephens (1841) visited the northern zone of the Tzeltal, from Ocosingo to Yajalon, going through Bachajon and Chilon.

Traveling the same route two decades later in the opposite direction, the French explorer Désiré Charnay recorded his impressions in a small book (1863).

In 1901 Frederick Starr (1902), from the University of Chicago, made a short visit to the region.

In 1925 Blom and LaFarge traversed from north to south a large part of Tzeltal territory, publishing their data in three chapters of their *Tribes and Temples* (1926–

[P 198-B]

4: Villa Rojas E-4, 5 (1938-1944) 1969
NV9 Tzeltal NV9

114 27) but without touching on social organization.

[101] [122] Study of social organization began in 1938 when I made my first trip through the region under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington (Redfield and Villa Rojas, 1939, pp. 107–19). In 1942–44 we spent several periods among the Tzeltal of Oxchuc, establishing camp at Yochib, and published the results soon thereafter (Villa Rojas, 1946, 1947).

Since 1957 various investigations by the universities of Chicago, Harvard, and Stanford have been headed by the anthropologists Sol Tax, Norman A. McQuown, Evon Z. Vogt, Julian Pitt-Rivers, and A. Kimball Romney.

221 241 SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS AND FOOD HABITS

The Milpa

Nothing is of greater importance to the Indian than to have a good *milpa*. Three classes of milpas are cultivated: *sijomal*, planted in mid-January and harvested three months later; *nal-aual* or "March milpa" planted in mid-March and harvested toward the end of August; the main milpa, *jabil-caltic* or "milpa of the year," sown between April and May and harvested between November and December. The first two types are most often cultivated in the lower zone of Tierra Caliente, where humidity is favorable.

241 804 Among the Tzeltal of Oxchuc (Villa Rojas, 1946, pp. 510–39), milpa work begins in February with the measuring of the plot. The measuring rod (*jaubtic*), which presumably corresponds to a *brazada* (the distance between the arms extended), is equivalent to 1.98 m. The area 8 brazadas square takes the name of *tarea* (about 256 sq. m.). The area of the milpa is also computed according to the number of ears of corn needed for seeding; 60 ears of corn are required to fill 1.5 hectares, the average in milpas that we observed.

241 412 Since the bush is short, only a hatchet (*eche*) is necessary to cut it down. The

[P. 199-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

CHAPTER XV

THE NORTHERN TZELTAL TRIBES

Ever since leaving Zona Sala, we had been working in the country of the Tzeltal-speaking tribes who form an outpost of the Highland Indians. The Bachajon, of the Finca Encanto and Bachajon village, and the Indians of Ocosingo and the neighbouring valleys, living as they do, cut off from the outside world, strong in number, and of a rather independent disposition, gave us the first evidences of how little the Indian of the Chiapas Highlands has changed since the days before Columbus. The kings and priests are dead, the temples have been replaced by churches and Christian forms, but the Indians and labourers of today in many respects live the life that their humble forebears did five hundred years ago.

At this point, before describing our trip up into the true mountain country, it seems opportune to tell something of these people, their manners and customs. We did not have time to make an exhaustive study of any of them, but they were constantly with us as guides and labourers, and we passed through many of their villages. At El Encanto we had a chance to visit and examine the settlement of the finca's workmen, with the kind help of Señor Ciriaco Aguilar, who acted as interpreter and supplied us with invaluable information. Señor Arturo Tovilla helped us with the Linguistic Lists (see Appendix III), as well as describing many of the customs recorded in this chapter. Señor Aureo Cruz of Toniná dictated a Tzeltal Prayer and Conversation, which was analyzed with the help of Señor Manuel Bulnes of El Real. (See Appendix VI). In general it may be said that all the Spanish-speaking people with whom we dealt helped us in every way possible.*

The Bachajon (*Batcahon*) and Ocosingo Valley Indians are, as has been said, an outlying part of a large group living in the mountain country. They speak the Tzeltal language, belonging to that branch of the great Mayance stock more closely related to Maya. In the pine country of Chiapas they hold the largest share of land, occupying an irregular area running southeast from Simojovel to

[175]

*The written sources bearing directly on the ethnology of these people are very meager. Nuñez de la Vega (1702) gives the best account of the early religion; his section on Nagualism has been reprinted by Pantaleon (1908) along with an important selection of other early sources. Licenciado Vicente Pineda (1888) in his account of the Indian uprisings, gives some information, together with the most complete linguistic material. He gives a native calendar, probably based on one published by Emeterio Pineda (1845). Of modern scientific works, Starr (1901 and 1902) has ethnographic material, and publishes the only physical measurements (1902). Seler (1888) goes into the calendar in detail. For comparative material Tozzer (1907) and Sapper (1925) have been our chief reliance. Sapper's "Nordliche Mittelamerika" (1897) was in constant use in the field for information on all subjects. Particular references are given as they occur. Prof. Rudolph Schuller kindly allowed me access to his manuscript material.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón

the Guatemala border, which it overlaps at Gracias á Dios. They do not reach the highest part of the mountains. For the most part, they live in isolated tribal groups, although in some places, notably in Ocosingo Valley, they are attached to *haciendas* and *fincas*. Much of the easternmost country marked in the maps as belonging to them and the Chol is actually uninhabited wilderness, or, if occupied at all, is Lacandone territory.

Their immediate neighbours of the Highlands are the Zotzil and Chaneabal. The former speak a language differentiated from Tzeltal only by a shift of *a*, *e*, and *b* to Zotzil *o*, *i*, and *m*, respectively.* Chaneabal is spoken by a small group near Comitan. The people of that place say that the language is simply Tzeltal influenced by Mames contact. The list given in Appendix III, seems to bear this out. To the north, and around Tumbalá, are the Chol Indians, whose language is quite distinct, but, of all the other Mayance tongues, probably the nearest to the Highland group.

The language itself has been variously named Cendal, Tzendal, Cendales, Tzental, and Tzeltal. I have taken the latter form, as it most nearly represents the Indians' own form, *ts'eltal*, varied in careless speech to *tceltal*. The villages are spoken of as tribes, because each one forms a separate, self-governing unit. There is no evidence of cohesion within the language-group as a whole save during certain periods of uprisings. Individual villages may resemble tribes of another speech more closely than they do those of their own. The Mexican spelling of Tzeltal names is given first, followed by the phonetic spelling (See Appendix III), and the translation, if known.

The Bachajon live on the threshold of the pine country. Their farms may be found hidden away in the thick jungle land of mahogany and palms, through which their little hidden trails lead to houses tucked away out of sight of alien travelers. Altogether, they are estimated at five thousand families, but it is doubtful whether evidences of more than fifty farms could be seen by one passing along the trail through the heart of their country. The capital, Bachajon Village, is among the pines. There, periodically, the Spaniards used to round them up, that they might be more easily policed, and for the benefit of the church established there. Once there was a fine, stone church and a neat Cabildo with white walls, colonnade, and tiled roof. Both have been wrecked by the Indians, apparently because they did not like to be reminded of alien domination, for from the wreckage of the old church, they took tiles to roof their new one, and they have a straw-thatched Cabildo for the Maestro, or government agent.

*Starr (1902) quoting Sanchez (1890).

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Acknowledgments

My study of the people of Tzo'ontahal was made in four field sessions, the first in 1957 with return trips in 1958, 1964, and 1965, for a total of eighteen months. Brief visits were made in 1966 and 1967. With each returning visit it was possible to penetrate more deeply into the lives and experiences of the villagers, most of whom were highly resistant to an outsider on the first contact. I began writing the book in 1966, and some of the predictions I made came true before I finished it in 1968. These included the demise of the ceremonial leadership of the *alfereces*—the officials in charge of religious celebrations—the waning of the community status of curers, and the killing of one of my principal informants who had taken a leadership role before acquiring the traditional validation of age and experience in office. The transformations over the period of my study in this community created difficulties in recording and organizing my material. I owe whatever clarification has emerged to the efforts of Jane Olson and Gale Griffin of Yale University Press.

I am indebted to the National Institutes of Mental Health, which made possible the research for this study. I owe an intellectual debt to Sol Tax, who introduced me to the problems and potentialities of the area as a locus for field study, to Norman McQuown, who gave me the first instruction in Tzeltal and provided a grammar which facilitated learning the language, and to Manning Nash, who provided some of the earlier formulations of the culture from which I have borrowed. I am grateful to Duane Metzger and Gerald Williams, who generously provided equipment and facilities for work with informants in San Cristóbal Las Casas in the summer of 1964. Alfonso Villa Rojas, who was director of the Instituto Nacional Indígenista, was of great assistance in the first summer's field trip, introducing me to leaders within the town and in the Instituto's headquarters in Las Casas.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970

NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle
Mexico NU1

nic unity extending back to the beginning of time. The people set boundaries by such external symbols as a locally specified costume for men and women, a distinctive dialect of Tzeltal, and specialization in the production of pottery. Implicit boundaries are established by socialization processes that inhibit response to the outside world and that define a code of behavior understandable only in its own context. The completely socialized member of the community is not expected to seek recognition, nor could he find prestige, outside these boundaries. The community comprises the moral universe: cooperation and reciprocity are limited to members of the community, as are most cases of homicide and theft. Lacking concrete evidence, people assume misdeeds to have been committed by someone from the community.

The boundaries that separate these Indians from other Indian communities as well as from non-Indian, or *Ladino*,[1] communities are social artifacts that give a sense of security to members of the in-group. They call themselves "the true men" (*b'atz'il winik*), and their world is defined in "the true word" (*b'atz'il k'op*). The latter is their term for the Tzeltal dialect of Maya which is the language of the house and of the street, the courthouse, and the church in the absence of the Spanish-speaking priest. Tzeltal names differ from Spanish names for most of the surrounding towns, the earth, the heavens, and the cosmological bodies. Catholic saints are incorporated under a Tzeltal name or a Tzeltal version of their Spanish name. All of the members of the community have a Tzeltal patronym in addition to the Spanish surname with which they are baptized. The given name is that of a Spanish saint but is shortened and pronounced with Tzeltal phonemes, and female names have the feminine prefix *i*. Their world is labeled in their own language.

The people assume that their expectations will be met and their projec-

1. The term Ladino has a range of usage throughout Middle America. In Mexico City, people define Ladino as any person who abuses his superior skills to take advantage of others. In Oaxaca, a Zapotec Indian defined Ladino as "an Indian who knows Spanish, has adopted western-style clothing, and takes advantage of other Indians because of his knowledge of the language and ways of life of the non-Indian society. He is like a fox." In Chiapas, the term is applied to any non-Indian without derogatory connotation, and the same is true in Guatemala. In the metalanguage of anthropological monographs, it is used in this latter sense.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Chapter 1

Spirits and Places

Social space is the cognitive pattern of relationships imposed upon any terrain. In Amatenango del Valle[1] there are two superimposed patterns. One is defined by the nation for the purposes of political administration. This follows the pattern of colonial administration of *municipios,* or townships, with a *cabecera,* or administrative center, containing the church, town hall, and school house, and serving a number of colonias and *rancherias,* local hamlets or nuclei of populations. The other pattern is defined by the inhabitants using Tzeltal terminology or a Tzeltal rendition of a Spanish name. In this pattern, domains of good and bad spirits are defined, and behavior appropriate to each place is specified in myths and rituals. Persistence of this pattern has had profound implications for continuity of pre-Conquest culture. It provides a ground plan for the system of social control and security exercised by the old gods and their human intermediaries.

In the following section, I will discuss first territorial divisions defined by national law and modified by indigenous categories, and then the interaction between the spirits of persons and places.

The Territorial Divisions

The township of Amatenango del Valle is located at 92°30′ longitude and 16°30′ latitude in the highland zone of the state of Chiapas. The town center is located no more than fifty yards from the Pan-American Highway twenty-five miles southeast of the departmental capital of San Cristóbal.

1. I use the national designation derived from Nahuatl, Amatenango del Valle, to refer to the township, and the Tzeltal term Tzo'ontahal to refer to the center.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

Although the town center forms a rough rectangle on Map 1, the people think of it as being a square.[2] This conforms to the cultural ideal of a square applied in house, milpa, village, and probably world, although when anyone is asked about the last, he cautiously answers, "I have heard that it is round." The center is the unit that the people think of when they say *hteklum*, my land or my village. House lots are not sold to outsiders, particularly Ladinos, but the prohibition applies as well to other Indians living within the limits of the township.

The residents of the center identify themselves with the former residents of the two pre-Conquest sites occupying the hill of Amawitz[3] northwest of the center, and the hill of San Nicolás (called Lelem in Tzeltal) to the southeast. The following account is given of the founding of the present town in the valley:

Our ancestors lived in Amawitz. There wasn't enough water there, but there was a great deal that passed here in the valley. The ancestors came out of their cave to look at where the people should move. They told the people where they should go. The people "thought in common." They cut the trees here; then, when it was dry, they burned it with fire as they do for milpa. When it was cleared, they began to build their houses. Others saw this and came to build their houses. When they finished building their houses, everyone began to think of building a church. The first church was built in Alannantik [the low side] for San Pedro the Martyr. This was torn down because the witches used to come to get the permission of San Pedro to do witchcraft. When the new church was built, there was a division of the town into the upper and lower sections.

It is significant that the people attribute the initiative in the resettlement to the mythical ancestors, although archaeological evidence indicates that the present center was settled after the Conquest. The Conquest is not a part of their mythico-historic past. The ancestors are given credit for establishing everything.

2. The pre-Conquest term for local center was Tzamgholal (Calnek 1962:25), signifying "square head." "Head" town was possibly a ceremonial center.

3. Hermitte (1964:48) notes that in Pinola the "police" of the spiritual government are sent to outposts in Amawitz and Me?wakal in Amatenango. This suggests that it may be considered the ancestral home of other Indians of the area.

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND FOR A CONTROLLED COMPARISON

Geography and Ecology

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The communities selected for this study are located in the southwest quarter of the state of Chiapas, which is the southernmost state of the Republic of Mexico. This is a mountainous area
[133] belonging to the Sierra Madre Occidental, and a part of the state's Central Plateau. The Plateau Summit of the area is to the north northwest of the villages, and contains the city of San Cristobal las Casas, ex-capital of the state (the present capital, Tuxtla, is in the lowlands).

The villages themselves are situated in the terraced margins of the plateau, which extend to the South into the Grijalva River Depression, and to the north and east into the Lacandon Jungle.

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The slightly inclined terraces are criss-crossed by several small streams tributary to the Blanco River, and by a complex network of paths, trails, and roads, including a section of the Pan American Highway which connects Mexico City with Guatemala and which is being constructed.

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The villages of Aguacatenango and Amatenango are in two contiguous valleys (see Fig. 1) near to the section of the Pan

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 16]

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango
Aguacatenango

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621 and Amatenango are at present divided into two endogamous barrios, remnants of these parcialidades.

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101 The origin myth of Aguacatenango seems to agree with the historical evidence, both indicating that the Amatenango settlement was founded somewhat earlier. According to the people of Aguacatenango their ancestors came from a place named "Bahuitz," close to the region of Oxchuc. The elders of the group chose a place about 1,000 feet lower than the present location of the town. They had to move from this place (which now is the colonia of El Puerto, where Aguacatenango owns land for cultivation) because "they were bitten by insects and disliked the climate."

They arrived at the site of their present location, and asked for permission to occupy it from the people of Amatenango, from whom they obtained the land. While they were clearing the land for their houses, some men from Amatenango arrived to ask what they were doing. "We are cutting down the trees," they answered, and thus "Ceté," which means "cutting down," became their name. When they finished their work they sent some men to visit the Amatenango men and they found them gathering firewood. They asked again "What are you doing?" "Hcob'tah," "gathering" the other responded, and that became their name. Both villages today call themselves and each other by these names.

Linguistics

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197 The legend summarized above seems to imply that the two villages were populated by people who could speak to each other in the same language. This is confirmed by linguistic evidence.